

SERMON
Preach'd before
Her Sacred Majesty
THE
QUEEN,
IN HER
CHAPPEL
AT
WINDSOR

On the 21st. day of April, Anno 1686.

By Father *Nicholas Cross*, of the Holy Order of *St. Francis*,
and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY.

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L O N D O N,

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CHAPPEL

WINDSOR

ON THE 10th DAY OF APRIL 1754.

By JOHN WILKINS, M.A.

Rector of St. Andrew's Church, London.

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1754.

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T H E
Q U E E N,

In Her CHAPPEL at
W I N D S O R

On the 21st. day of April Anno 1686.

Beati qui habitant in domo tua Domine.
Blessed are those, O Lord, who dwell in thy House.
Psal. 83. v. 5.

THe Egyptians (Most Sacred Majesty)
(willing to Decypher, and Pencil out
Nature, whom they look'd upon, as
the Source and Fountain, whence all Favours
were deriv'd to Men,) represented her in a
Humane Shape; having a Breast that continu-
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ally guish'd forth a Precious and Sovereign Liquor : Her *Right-hand* was buis'd in removing Dangers from her Favourites, whilst the *Other* was laden with Rewards to recompence those who Ador'd her.

These Inventions of *Antiquity*, do lively set forth the Portraicture of our *Eternal Father*, who from an unexhausted *Spring* of Charity, inebriates with ineffable Sweetness, those who Love Him, *Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tue, & torrente voluptatis tue potabis eos*, says the Psalmist, That they shall be inebriated from the Plenty of thy House, and of the Torrent of his Pleasure he will make them Drink. So that God may justly be term'd to have a *Breast* which conveys a most Delicious Stream, whose Sweetness cannot be Express'd, and only Comprehended by those who have happily Experienc'd it ! His *Right-hand* is always ready to Shield his Servants from Dangers in this Life, whilst the other is ready in the Next, to Vest them with a State of Glory, as far surpassing Humane Eloquence to unfold, as our Sufferings to Merit, *Quia non sunt Condignæ passionis hujus temporis, ad futuram gloriam que revelabitur in nobis* : Because, The Tribulations in this Life, are no

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ways proportionable to that Future Bliss, which shall be revealed unto Us; When the Curtains of our Mortality shall be drawn, and that we have ended the last Act of this Life by a Happy Period.

This Text gives me occasion to speak of the Joies of Paradice; and though they exceed, *What either Eye hath seen, Ear hath heard, or the Understanding of Man can comprehend.* However, *First*, I will venture to give you a rough Draught of them. And in the sequel, Chaulk out to you the Means by which they may be Obtain'd. But before I begin, I beg the Concurrence of your Prayers, to purchase the Gift of the *Holy Ghost*, by the Intercession of the *Blessed Virgin*.

Most Sacred Virgin, who art the Conduit, Conveying Life and Grace from the Bosom of thy Son, to wretched Creatures; and whose Happy Soul, is advanced to the highest pitch of Perfection, of which any Pure Creature can be capable; assist me if you please, so to describe a State of Glory, as that my Audience may be Enflam'd with a Zeal for its Acquisition; and we will Salute thee, saying, Ave Maria, &c.

IT is an *Axiom* in *Phylosophy*, that all things Created have allotted to them, as proper to their Being and Consistence, a Center, or resting place whereunto they Naturally tend; wherein they are fully satisfied, and unto which they are united by so strict a Simpathy, as, without violence they cannot be separated. We see the *Elementary* Bodies have their Center, where they are in Quiet and Repose. *Plants* grow to a certain greatness, proper to their Species: The Natural Appetite of *Brutes* Encounters that, which gluts their Avidities; All other things find here their utmost Perfection. Man therefore being the most Noble Creature of this Inferior World, Adorn'd with the Lively Image of his Creator, and constituted Lord and Master of the Universe, cannot want some Term, or Object, to which he is born by an impetuous Instinct of Nature, and which once acquir'd, all motions and pretensions would cease: Yet 'tis most certain that he alone, during this Life cannot attain, and reach unto his Center: For his Understanding Elevates his Thoughts above the Heavens, and all the Power of Nature; his Will frames infinitely

infinitely more Desires, then the World hath Perfections; by which we are Taught, *That for Man to be Happy, he must enjoy a Sovereign Good*; For all the Beauties, Empires, Riches, and Pleasures of the World, cannot give a full Satisfaction to the Will; it still longs and breaths after an Universal Being, which cannot be found in things Created. Wherefore we must conclude, *There is a Goodness Infinite, an Essence most Simple, which containing all Good, is Sovereignly Happy in Himself*: And this is the due, and right Object of our VVills and Desires. The Royal Prophet insinuates as much, when he says, *Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua*: *That nothing can satiate the boundless Soul of Man, but the Sight of God in Eternal Bliss*. *Fishes* live not but in the VVater, *Birds* in the Air, *Plants* with their Røots fixed in the Earth; all other things in the place proper to their Being: So the *Mind of Man* cannot be free from Anguish, whilst separated from God; He is the *Center of our Hearts*: In whom, as *St. Paul* says, *We live, move, and are*. Excellently well *St. Austin* Expresses this saying. *O Domine aliquando introducis me in nescio quam dulcedinem, que si perficiatur in me, nescio quid erit,*

sed nescio quod vita ista non erit: O Lord thou dost sometimes lead me into unknown Delights, which if compleated in me, I know not what it will be; But sure I am, it cannot be this Life. For he clearly discern'd, that the condition of our Mortality wherein we here lie groveling, is no ways capable of those Ravishing Delights prepared to fill the extent of our God-thirsting-Souls. He goes on saying, Fecisti nos Domine ad te, & inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te: O Lord thou hast made us for Thee, and our Hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.

Cast your Thoughts on whatsoever your Fancy and Imagination can frame, and you will find this a Truth undeniable, if you consider *Sensual Delights*; behold a *Solomon*, the greatest of *VVits*, a Prince, Young, Rich, Powerful, and swelling in a full Plenty of all Things; who made it his Study, to Deliciate himself, in whatever might be agreeable to his Senses: Yet in fine, he publish'd his little satisfaction, Crying, *Vanitas, vanitatum, & omnia vanitas*. He avows his Folly, and all his Experience had but taught him, there must needs be some Transcendent Object, to correspond with his unsatisfied Desires. Again,

Again, if you go more Rationally to work, and weigh the Operations of our Spiritual Substance, these likewise we shall find here deficient, though not in the Object, yet in the manner of enjoying it; Of this, we have a *President* in the Person of St. Paul, who was wrapt up to the *Third Heavens*, admitted unto Secrets unfit to unfold to Man, priviledged with the Dignity of an Apostle, and acquitted himself of that Charge, the most Gloriously that ever Man did; was become so Spiritual as to find Solid Contentment amidst Chains, Prisons, and all sort of Persecution: Yet notwithstanding all this, he issues forth this plain-
ing Note: *Cupio dissolvi, & ei cum Christo*; *I desire to be Dissolved and be with Christ*; which evidences, there was yet something wanting to accomplish his *Desires*.

Since then 'tis clear, *There is another Life wherein must be terminated the motion of our still-working Souls*; Let us, if you please, a little glance upon it, and solace our selves, in the Discourse of what will be one day, I hope, the Subject of our Fruition; though at present, but of our sweet Expectation: And here methinks, I am just like a Vessel Lanch'd into
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the Main Ocean, without Helm or Compass, which tells me, I may wander, but whither, and to what Port, uncertain: So I, about to shadow forth a state of Glory, am distracted into as many Thoughts as there be *Idæa's* of things, which cause Pure Delight; fain would I fix on something, but alas! each glimpse of Glory strikes me dumb, and makes me cry out, with that great Pen-man *St Austin*, *Amari potest, æstimari non potest: It may be Lov'd, not Priz'd, nor consequently Express'd.*

You see then my *Dear Audience*, into what a Labyrinth I am cast, and how unable to perform my designed Task. However, I will venture to speak one thing, and this *One thing*, is all; 'tis the sum and Epitomy of what ever may be said thereof; to wit; *That we shall one day be made Happy, by that same Felicity, wherewith he himself, (who is Sovereign Lord of all things,) is Blessed, and made Happy.* For his Beatitude is, to Enjoy Himself, and Contemplate his own Beauty and Perfections: And this same Beatitude will be Communicated to us poor Worms through his Liberality, *Similes erimus & videbimus eum sicuti est*, Joan 1 ep. c. 2. *We shall be like to him, and see him as he is:*
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Then, that *Divine Essence*, which hath given Life and Being to all Creatures, from whence they derive what ever they have of Beauty and Perfection, will be laid open to our Embraces. Then, that *Divine Essence* which hath ravish'd into Admiration, by the Splendour of his Glory the *Seraphins*, and all the *Blessed Spirits*, for above these five thousand years, will be given up to our Possession, to gaze thereon and feed our Glorify'd Senses for all Eternity: Then will happen, what I said to you in the beginning, *Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua. Then all motion, and Pretensions will cease.* Then this Will of ours, which leads us here incessantly from one Pleasure to another still as unwearied, as unsatisfy'd, will have nothing more to Will, or Desire. For the Soul freed from the Bodies Cumber, and Allurements of Flesh, will plunge her self into the Abiss of the *Divinity*; and will there be necessitated to Love; for 'tis impossible not to Love this Sovereign Object propos'd unto us, by a clear Vision: And as Iron red hot, is divested of its own form, to put on that of Fire; so the Soul enflam'd with this Love and Beatifick Fruition, will by a way wholly ineffable, even

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melt from her self, and dissolve into God; where all her Affections, will be *in a manner*, Deify'd, and lost *as it were* in the *Divine Essence*.

Then this understanding of ours, which toils it self in the search of *Natures Secrets*, will be at rest; reading in the *Divine Nature*, *Divine* and *Humane Mysteries*, and all the wonders that have been wrought by the Omnipotency, Wisdom and Goodness of God; for, Elevated by the Light of Glory, we shall see all things, which are *Formally* in God, that is, all his Perfections; his *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Power*, *Eternity*, *Immensity*, and his other *Attributes*. *Videbimus eum sicuti est*, says S. John, *We shall see him as he is*; which would not be so, if any of those lay hid from us. And whereas all the Perfections in God, is but one Pure, and most simple Perfections, hence it is, that his *Divine Essence* cannot be objected, without a clear display of all his Perfections. VVe shall see in the *Word*, the *Beauty*, and Order of the Universe, all the *Species*, and *Kinds* of Natural Things. For the *Beatifick Vision* will not be inferior to the Natural Knowledge of Angels, and as they Naturally know all things, so shall the Blessed; it being a condition requisite to their Understanding.

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We shall see all the *Supernatural Mysteries*, which have been here matter of our Belief ; for then, passing from the Obscurity of *Faith*, unto the Splendor of a *Vision*, we shall behold the *Lamb, Unclasping his Mysteriorious Book* : We shall Contemplate the *Sublime Mystery* of the *Blessed Trinity*, how the *Father* produces his *Son Co-eternal* and *Consubstantial* to him ; how the *Father*, and the *Son* Loving one another, Breaths forth the *Holy Ghost* : How Three are One, and make up a *Trinity*, in *Unity*. Then shall we perfectly understand how *Christ* is entirely contain'd after *Consecration* under the *Species* of *Bread* and *Wine*, and how the Lord of Heaven and Earth is confin'd to so small a compass, as to be grasp'd by our unworthy Hands.

I cannot omit a Curious Dispute amongst *Divines*, touching the Operations of the *Soul*, by which *Beatitude* is convey'd unto her, and made perfect. *St. Thomas* gives it to the Operation of the *Understanding*, as comprizing the *Essence* of *Beatitude*, and looks upon the *Will*, but as an accident, and propriety inseparable from *Beatitude* : His reason is, *That the Understanding appears to him as the most Noble Faculty of the Soul, and consequently in its Operation consists the*

Essence of Beatitude which is the clear Vision of God.

Scotus, The Subtile Doctor, and our Patriot, attributes all unto the *Will*; which Transports the Blessed with ineffable Joyes, and renders them satisfy'd throughout the vast Spaces of *Eternity*; his reason is, *The Will is free, can make her Choice, Grant, or Refuse, which is not Compatible with the Understanding, and consequently he esteems Love to be a thing more Excellent then Vision.*

But notwithstanding these Arguments, I embrace the Opinion of our more *Antient Divines*, who joyntly require both *Vision* and *Love*; and that *Man's highest Perfection consists in the Operation of these two Faculties united together.* For to say the Truth, there is little satisfaction to behold, what we *Love* not, be the Object never so accomplish'd; nay, could *Lucifer* see God, and yet be bar'd from Loving him, he would be miserable; for his *Will*, not permitted to Love an Object, which appears to him infinitely amiable, would certainly, be Tortur'd in the highest degree.

Again, We Enjoy God, by *Contemplating* his infinite Perfections, and *Relishing* his Im-
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menſe Goodneſs and Sweetneſs; The *Fiſt* proceeds from *Viſion*, the *Other* from *Love*; ſo that theſe together, are the *Effence*, and accompliſhment of our Supream Happineſs.

To Conclude, *Beatitude* gives unto God the greateſt Glory; now, he is not leſs Glorify'd in being Eternally Lov'd, then being Eternally Seen; as a Prince is not leſs Glorious by the Affection of his People, then by the deſire they have to behold him. Hence it is, that God's greateſt Glory, being to be ſeen, and loved; 'tis evident, that our *Beatitude* conſiſts in the joynt Operations of our Underſtanding, and Will.

Methinks, it were not amiſs, My Dear Audience, to examine our ſelves, how we have imploy'd theſe Noble Faculties of the Soul, in order to that end, for which they were Ordain'd: And whether we have made our *Final end*, and utmoſt Perfection, the frequent ſubject of our *Thoughts* and *Deſires*. For certainly the *Meditation* of Heavenly things, produces admirable Irradiations in the Underſtanding, by which we may the better diſcern our Concerns, in what relates to God and our Salvation: *Meditation* is an Entertainment
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with God which is the Life of Angels, a Life imparting to us the greatest share of Paradise as possibly can be attain'd to, in this World : So that truly it may be justly term'd the *Beatitude of this Life* : For 'tis most Efficacious, to obtain a grant of our Petitions, as being perform'd with a greater Fervency, and Elevation of Spirit ; and hath likewise a wonderful Power, to Enrich the Soul with all kind of *Virtues*, being the very Source and Root of all Holiness and Devotion. Upon these Considerations, many Spiritual Masters, have asserted, that not only Religious, but *All persons are obliged to practice Meditation*, at least in some little measure. For they look upon it, as a necessary means to avoid sin, and to preserve our selves in the Fear and Love of God ; which is hard to be done, without a Serious Reflection upon the concerns of our Salvation. Now by Mental Prayer above all other Devotions, this important Affair of our Salvation is most lively imprinted in us ; And though I do not approve the Opinion of those, who hold it *Obligatory to all* : Nevertheless you may gather from hence, how injurious you have been unto your selves, if you have let your *Understanding* and
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Will be taken up, in the pursuit of petty and trifling Pleasures, in Sensual Things; and for those Childish Baits of Flesh and Blood, forfeit the sweet Antipast of Heaven, convey'd unto Us in a serious Meditation. Ah! Did you consider the advantages of Mental Prayer, you would doubtless, set a part one Hour at least every Day, to ruminate upon your *Final End*, and utmost perfection; which consideration cannot but stir in Us, ardent Desires after that blessed State; and sweeten all the acerbities of this Life, by that *Blessed Hope*, as St. *Peter* terms it.

Certain it is, in the Transitory Passage of this Life, we experience the most solid contentment and satisfaction, to consist in the Sweet Meditations of Divine Mysteries: For alas! without those hopes, which Faith gives Us, no Creature more wretched than Man; for we are Banished *as it were*, into a Land of Misery; enslav'd by Sin, where we truckle under unruly Passions, that hurry Us into many Disasters and Calamities; At last, we finish a deplorable Life, by Death, in whose Face is seated nothing but Dread and Horrour: After this, Corruption, Stench, and Infection, are the last
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Farewel and Monument of Us ; So that without Faith, actuated by Mental Prayer, we are Center'd within these Miseries, unable to carry our Sight, beyond the low condition of a Brute. Whereas on the contrary, *Faith Teaches, We are born to a Supernatural* and blessed end; which we are to purchase by Acts of Religion. Next, *that our Souls are Immortal*, by which resembling the Angels, we are excluded from Putrefaction, and approach the nearer unto God. Lastly, *That He hath Created all things of nothing*; in which Belief, we acknowledge his Omnipotency, and from thence cherish our hopes, that, if he could Extract Us out of nothing, with more facility (we believe) he can after Death, re-joyn our dis-united parts.

• What a Comfort then, to consider, that *this state of the Blessed is Eternal*; witness the Royal Prophet, *Longitudine dierum ad implebo eum*, That he will replenish us with Length of days; that is, with Eternity, as all the *Fathers* exponnd it. For an apprehension to be deprived of what we enjoy, doth often blast our contentment even in the Bud. But these joy-blasting fears have no place in the Elect: As they can covet nothing more than what they have,

have, so shall they possess it, as long as they desire ; and as their desires are fed with an object, infinite, immutable, and Sovereignly blest: So their Joys shall be immense, without end, unchangeable, and in all points accomplish'd. In the possession of this Divine Being, its attractive Features both Delight, and Ravish ; and in such a manner, as still enkindle new Flames and new Desires : For after Millions of Ages have wax'd old, in this our fruition we shall feel the same Fervour, Complaisance and Ravishing Transports, as at the first instant of our happiness.

Now, as it is Eternal in it self, so is it inamissible to us, *Gaudium vestrum nemo tollet à vobis*; Joan. 16. *No Envious or Repining hand shall wrest it from you*, For those blessed Co-partners, and Co-heirs to that Rich Inheritance, are fully satisfy'd, each with his Portion, he that hath a lesser share of Grace and Glory, maligns not him that is more amply enrich'd, because he hath enough to make him happy : Besides their *Beatitude* consisting in a Conformity to the Divine Will ; The Dispensation of his Heavenly Largeesses, is part of their Felicity ; So that each appropriates to himself the good

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of his Neighbour, and Joys as much in it, as in his own ; and whatever accidental Glory excelling, is found in One, occasions matter of *Thanksgiving*, and *Benedictions* to the Other.

Falicitas est habere omne quod cupis, & nihil habere eorum quæ odisti. S. Austin Defines Felicity, to be a Collection of all that you Love, and an Exclusion from all that you Hate S. Gregory Stiles it, *Satietas deliciarum*, Such a Surcharge of all Delights, such a delicious Stream, that if one drop thereof should fall into Hell, it would mitigate and assuage all the Torments of the Damned. Hence I wonder not, if that unfortunate Rich Man, mention'd in the Scripture, did so Howl, and Cry, but for one Drop of that Heavenly Stream, since it had been sufficient to allay all his Heat, and Charm his Misery into Felicity.

Having now *My dear Audience* as I hope, at least in some little measure, warm'd your Affections, In order to this blessed State, I am persuaded it will draw your Attention unto the Means how it is to be obtain'd, which shall be my *Second Point*, and so I shall end.

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Our Blessed Saviour, in the 5th. Chapt. of St. Matthew, declares who may lay a claim to this Great Inheritance, saying, *Beati qui Persecutionem patiuntur propter Justitiam quoniam ipsorum est Regnum Cælorum. Blessed are those who suffer Persecution for Justice sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* These are the Letters Patents, and Grand Deeds, by which you may enter into Possession. But Alas! My Dear Audience, I must here change my Stile, and draw your Thoughts, from that sweet Repose, wherein, perhaps I have Lodg'd them, to fill you with Tempests and Whirl-winds; And tell you, *If you will have a Crown, you must Fight for it.* Holy Job weighing Man's Condition here, Defines it thus. *Militia est vita Hominis super Terram. The Life of Man is a Warfare upon Earth: Within, unruly Passions disturb us; Without, the Envy and Malice of others: So that from our very Infancy, to the Tomb, the Noise and Terrour of Combats attend us: This sharp Decree was passed immediately after our first Parents Transgression, and God declared it to him, that he should not eat his Bread, but at the rate of Sweaty Brows.* And

tho' God dispens'd with this his severe Sentence in the *Old Law*, promising unto the exact Observers of it, Long Life, Abundance of Wealth, a Plentiful Posterity, and the like ; Yet this was done, as he will leave no Virtue un-rewarded ; because Heaven's Gates were then shut up ; But when *Christ* had clear'd the Passage unto our *Eternal Felicity*, and clapt the *Thorns* (which were the Fruit of our Sins) upon his own Head, then Sufferings recovered so high a Being, and grew to that Value, *As the heavier God lays his Hand upon us, the more his Love appears ;* And of this, what greater Evidence, than that the Kingdom of Heaven, is an Infallible Consequence, to such as *suffer Persecution for Justice sake.*

Divines assert *Three Beings*, which are capable to enjoy a Sovereign Good ; to wit, *God, Angels, and Man* : *God* reaches his *Beatitude*, without any Motion ; because it is Natural, and Essentially Seated in him : But *Creatures*, who by their Natures are inferiour to *Beatitude*, ought not to arrive unto it, without some previous Endeavours for its acquisition. The *Angels*, who are of a Spiritual Substance, made this Great Purchase by one single Meritorious Opera-

Operation. But *Man*, who is set at a greater distance from *Beatitude*, clog'd with the Mass of his Body, usually speaking, by reason of Infants, Baptized, (who, without any Action of their own, are admitted unto Glory,) is obliged to many reiterated Acts of Virtue e're he come to the Acquisition: Wherefore, the Term of this Life is given him, as the time of his Tryal; God likewise allots to him, many Supernatural aids, which proportion his Good Works, unto the Greatness of *Beatitude*; And thus by Degrees, by many Hardships, by many Pious Exercises, he raises himself unto his Supream Felicity: And surely, none can repine at this; especially if we reflect how unweariedly, and with what Zeal, we Labour in the Purchase of Fading and Transitory Things.

How then, to perform this Task, Decreed by Heaven, and to bring it to a happy Issue, I know no *Medium* more suitable to our frail Condition, Than to Plant within us, an *Interiour Abnegation of our selves*, by which we give a Repulse to our Natural, Corrupted Inclinations; For when once we come to Divest our selves of our selves, that is, of *self-love*, then, all the Terrours of Mortification and Adversity find
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no effect ; Then, nothing but Generous and Heroick Acts, are Products of such a Soul ; For solid Virtue, like a Rose amidst Thorns, springs not forth, but in the soyl of Afflictions ; And when once a Soul comes to be seiz'd with this Holy Aversion against her self, she minds not the Difficulties she is to Wade through, to make good her Fidelity to God ; She casts her self upon the Points of Halberts, and other Instruments of Severity, without the least flinching or whining at their sharpness. She takes in with the same relish, the Gall of Misfortunes and Desolations, as She does the Hony of Prosperities and Comforts. No Stormy Season hinders her Journey, and that which disturbs Weak, and Effeminate Spirits, is to her, matter of Joy, because having her Thoughts always fix'd upon *Beatitude*, she looks upon Afflictions, as the *Medium* to lead her to it. So that all things which pass under the name of Adversity, is not so, but to the Wicked ; who make ill use of them, in prizing the Creature more than the Creator. Hence it is, that the general spirit of *Saints* have made them Ambitious after Sufferings ; and to look upon them as the choicest Favours of Heaven ; for they
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had Learnt by happy Experience, that if Almighty God was pleas'd, sometimes to reach unto them, the *Cup* of his *Passion*, it was but by snatches, and as it were a sup; whilst, with the other hand he gave them large Draughts of Consolation: To vèrify this Text relating to my Second Point. *Beati qui Persecutionem patiuntur: Blessed are those who suffer Persecution, &c.*

It is not'd in the Sacred Text, that God laid open the Person of *Job* to all the Assaults of *Sathan*, yet with this reserve, he should not touch upon his Life, nor that Death would have Eclips'd his Glory; but because God would not be depriv'd of such a Champion, to whose Conflicts, He, and his Blessed Angels were intent, with much satisfaction; And therefore he would not loose the Pleasure, to see this stout *Skirmish* Fought out to the last, 'twixt him and his Adversary.

Nay, *Seneca* out of the Principle of Humane Wisdom, drew this Excellent saying, *There is no Object* (says he) *so pleasing in the Eyes of the Gods, as to see a stout Man, with a settled Countenance, unmov'd, to struggle with Adverse Fortune: and truly the delay our Blessed Saviour made, in lending Succour to his Disciples, when endan-*
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gered by a Storm at Sea, sufficiently hints unto us, the Pleasure God takes, to see the *Just Row* against the Stream, to wrestle and struggle with the afflictions of this World.

Now, that God is pleased with these painful and satisfactory Acquittances, which we oft give him, Writ in our Sweat and Blood; and which *Christ* our Lord Receives, and makes a present of them, to his Eternal Father, together with his Own, from whence ours derive their Value: 'Tis not (I say) upon the score, that he is delighted to see us tormented, either in Mind or Body; but meerly, in that by them, his *Justice* is Exalted, and the *Palms* of our Victory more Resplendant.

It may be objected, (as oft it is by our *Adversaries*) that God is the *Searcher of Hearts*, he knows what we will do, and therefore he needs not these Exteriour *Testimonies*; Next, that *Christ's Merits* are of Infinite Value, and consequently ours altogether superfluous. To which I Answer, as to the *First*, That God's External Glory, consisting in the Visible Homages, rendered him by his Creatures; This would be wanting, unless he gave occasion, to manifest to the World, he hath Dependants, who
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value no Suffering in proportion to the Duty they owe him ; Besides, when we shall arrive at a State of *Bliss*, and reflect, we have done something, in some little measure, by the Concurrence of our *Free Will*, to Merit *Beatitude*, questionless it will be a great addition to our Contentment.

As to the other *Objection*, I acknowledge the Merits of *Christ* of an infinite Value, and abundantly sufficient ; Yet this will not excuse me from Offering, what I can in satisfaction : For the Glory of all our Actions belong unto God ; now as it is an Act of Injustice to defraud any one of his Estate, no less is it against Equity, to deprive God, of what is his Due ; if the Tree be mine, I have right to the Fruit it bears ; If the Land be mine, the Crop likewise is at my disposal : So in like manner, all that we have, all that we do, or shall do that is Good, is the Work of God, and a *Present*, wherewith he enriches us, that we may be able to give something to him : Wherefore as all is his, our Duty binds us to Consecrate all our *Interiour* and *Exteriour* *Actions* to promote his *Honour*. That Life, then which Contributes nothing to his Glory, is Perverse and Wicked ; and since it is rational,

sin should be punished, we ought to submit unto this *Grand Decree*, expose our selves to be Wrack'd, or Tortur'd by what Punishment the *Divine Majesty* shall think fit, either in Soul or Body ; Nor can we ever Repine, if we remember, *Beati qui Persecutionem patiuntur*, &c.

Our Blessed Saviour was not content to give bare *Documents* to his *Disciples*, but he confirmed his *Doctrine* by his own *Example* : To this end, he advances undauntedly to meet his Perfidious *Apostle*, attended on by a Squadron of Souldiers, bent to his Destruction : For this cause he yields his delicate Limbs, to the stroaks of *Merciless Executioners*, his unspotted Reputation to the *Blackest Calumnies* ; in fine, like an *Innocent Lamb*, dies upon the *Cross*, laden with Confusion, Sacrificing his Life to their Rage ; And why all this ? *Quia oportebat Christum pati, & ita intrare in Gloriam suam*. It is his own *Decree*, and tho' he is the *Law giver*, yet he will not be dispensed in it ; it is his own *Doctrine*, that this Evangelical *Pearl* shall not be Purchased, but at the rate of *Persecution*.

Those *Blessed Apostles*, who had the Honour to receive these Prescripts from *Christ's* own Mouth ; and many of them to be a Witness,
how

how he Seal'd them with his *Blood* ; all manifested by the Sequel of their Lives, and Deaths, that they were true *Disciples* of so Glorious a Master ; You shall not find one, who was not like a Perpetual Motion, unweariedly spending themselves in the Labours of Preaching, Disputing, Drawing Men from their Errours, and incessantly doing Acts of Charity ; in recompence, they were Revil'd, Imprison'd, Laden with Chains, Torn in pieces by Instruments of Cruelty, and at last taken away by a most Ignominious Death.

From their Times, in the Course, and Revolution of so many Ages, until this present, you shall find that the Servants of Almighty God were ever strangely oppress'd, and made as it were the Mockery of the World : Some throwing themselves in Caves, others roving up and down in Solitude. *Quibus dignus non erat Mundus ad Hebrew cap. II.* Of whom the World was not worthy ; Some cast into Dungeons, others drag'd unto Execution, and amidst all these Calamities, they had only this Consolation. *Beati qui Persecutionem patiuntur, &c.* Blessed are they who suffer Persecution, &c.

After then the *Authority* of our *Blessed Saviour*, and so many *Glorious Examples*, it were to groap in the Sun Beams, not to see, by what means, this Great Inheritance is to be Purchased. *Non Coronabitur nisi qui legitime Certaverit ad Timotheum cap. 2.* Without Combats no Crowns, and without Persecution no Heavens. *Et violenti rapiant illud Mat. 11.* And the *Violent* shall bear it away, That is, who use Violence, not so much *Active* as *Passive*, by forcing their Natures to stoop to Oppression, and to the Servile Acts, which *Poverty, Want, Contempt, and Disgraces* do throw upon them:

It is a Position of *Aristotle*, That 'tis a more Noble Act of Fortitude, *pati quam agere.* To endure them to Act. For to see a Mighty Prince with a Powerful Army to bear all before him, and lay the World *prostrate* to his Conquests, is something I confess; but these Persons find here their Reward, their Temples are Circled with Crowns, they have the Applause and Acclamation of the People, they have a full Sway and Dominion over those they have Conquer'd: But to see a Courage, amidst the Storms of Persecution, unshaken, like a Rock in the Ocean, whose hard Flanks Play with the Waves; and
to

to affront, with a Patient Suffering, the Rage of Tyrants; This is a Spectacle, that Ravishes the very *Angels*, and makes them to Emulate our Glory; This is an Action, not to be Lau-
 reated on Earth, all under Heaven is too small a Reward; *Quoniam ipsorum est Regnum Cælorum*. Because *Their's is the Kingdom of Heaven*.

To Conclude, you see My Dear Audience, there is nothing conveys an Odour so pleasing unto Heaven, as that of a Soul, anguished upon the score of God's Cause. The Oblation of a *Holocaust* imports the Reduction of it to *Ashes*; That of an afflicted Person, resigned in the Extremity of Worldly Afflictions, is a Transmutation into the *Holy Ghost*, who destroys not the matter of Sufferings, but allays them, by the Infusion of a Supernatural Virtue, that is Divine Hope. St. *Hierom*, calls a Soul Crush'd with Persecution, a *Sacrifice*, nay, it is a *Sacrifice* of what is most Dear unto us, to wit, the Friendship of Men: For *Christ* foretold his Servants they should be hated by the World; So that in Suffering for his Name, we forfeit what is Natural, and most Delightful to us. But whilst we are in this consuming Task, we must remember that as the Husband-man expects not the

the Fruit of his Labour, until the Seed he casts into the Ground be Corrupted, and thence a Plentiful Generation spring forth ; So we must continue Perishing, to the last, that so we may rise: under a new Form, never more to be Crush'd by the *Flayl*, or *Grinding-Mill* of Persecutors ; but to Flourish in *Eternal quiet*, as the just Recompence of an afflicted Spirit.

O all ye Blessed Spirits, be glad, and rejoyce for your Reward is great in Heaven; Your Tears are now dry'd up, your Sighs and Groans are stopt, and all your weary steps at an end. *Tristitia vestra vertitur in gaudium.* All your Sorrows are drown'd in a Deluge of Joys. What a Comfort now to look upon your Chains, turn'd into a most grateful Liberty ? What Gladness to behold your horrid Dungeons converted into a Magnificent Structure, irradiated with the ever-rising Sun of Justice ; Your Lands and Goods here Ravish'd from you, chang'd into the Fruitful Plains of *Sion* clad with an Eternal Spring ? You now happily Experience, there is not a turn of the Hand, glance of the Eye, or least motion of the Heart, imploy'd for God's sake, which is not considered in that great Reward, in that excellling
Recom-

Recompence, and that just Retribution of all Good Things. May we happily follow your steps, and so manage those Exciting Graces imparted to us, by your Liberal Hand, as one day to be Enlisted into that Reward you now enjoy, and shall for all Eternity. This we beg by your Intercession of Him, who is God for ever. *Amen.*

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